

Forest Legacy **UPDATE**

Protecting Important Forests from Conversion to Nonforest Use



Volume 3, Issue 2

Summit Park, Utah—A Successful Legacy Project

By Ann Price, Utah State Forest Legacy Coordinator

Over the course of its 15-year existence, the Forest Legacy Program (FLP) has funded the conservation of over 1 million acres. Although the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service's primary role is over when the project is completed, the properties continue to have a lasting effect on their communities and visitors.

In order to illustrate this effect, we asked Ann Price, Forest Legacy Program Coordinator from the Utah Division of Forestry, Fires, and State Lands to write about the current status of a completed Forest Legacy project. The Summit Park project in Utah was completed in 2001 as a fee simple acquisition with 50 percent of the funding coming from the FLP and 50 percent coming from non-Federal sources. We will highlight more projects, old and new, in future issues of the Update. —Eds.

Summit Park provides a backdrop for a community of 6,500 residents. Rising from 7,000 feet to 8,500 feet at the summit, the property is heavily forested in conifer and aspen, has abundant wildlife (e.g., deer, elk, moose, bobcat, and fox), and boasts a view unparalleled in the area.

Landowner Harrison Gentry purchased 350 acres in this densely developed area with the intent to further subdivide. But as the essence of the Utah outdoor experience became a part of his life, he realized that protection of the parcel was more important. He requested a conservation easement with the State on

325 acres of his land. After the conservation easement was established, Gentry decided that the Utah Division of Forestry, Fires, and State Lands would be the best steward of the land. He eventually donated the 325 acres, still under easement, to the State. This provided us with many challenges and opportunities—one of the most important being the ability to bring multiple partners and agencies together to

cooperatively manage this property.

The nearby community, plus multitudes of others in the area, became very interested in what was going on when we began our work on the property. They had long considered this property their backyard—hiking, mountain biking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing are

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FY 2006 Forest Legacy Program Budget

By Claire Harper, Forest Legacy Program Specialist

President Bush has continued his strong support for the FLP. The President's Budget for fiscal year (FY) 2006 requests \$80 million for the program, which is \$15 million above the FY 2005 enacted budget. This support is, in part, due to the program's strong performance as assessed by the Office of Management and Budget through the Program Assessment Rating Tool.

The President's Budget requests funds for 44 projects in 35 States and territories.

Visit the FLP Web site at <http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/coop/programs/loa/flp.shtml> or a list of projects. A national panel of Federal and State program managers developed the project list through a competitive ranking process. The top 10 projects are in Hawaii, Tennessee, Massachusetts, Maine, Washington (two projects), Pennsylvania, California, Montana, and Delaware.

Congress has begun its work to develop the final appropriations bill. As of April, both the House and Senate had finished their appropriations hearings for the Forest Service. Once finalized, the appropriations bill will determine the final FY 2006 budget and project list for the FLP.

Recently Completed Projects

<i>Project</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Total Value</i>	<i>FLP funding</i>
Green Horizons Phase II	DE	1/21/05	448	\$3,030,000	\$1,975,000
Blackfoot-Clearwater	MT	2/16/05	4,124	\$4,500,000	\$3,254,000
Baraboo Hills Cooperative	WI	2/10/05	672	\$951,415	\$713,561
Sheffield Inholding	GA	3/10/05	40	\$160,000	\$99,000
Noren Brothers	CA	3/9/05	9	\$701,000	\$400,000
Jim Creek	TN	11/23/04	1,541	\$1,118,000	\$828,085
Castle Ridge	VA	12/16/04	152	\$224,000	\$168,000
Pine Mountain	GA	12/15/04	2,506	\$5,012,000	\$3,974,000
Private Tract	SC	12/15/04	6,326	\$10,425,000	\$6,795,300
Roy Taylor Buffer	NC	11/4/04	854	\$2,300,000	\$950,000
The Conservation Fund Property	NC	12/3/04	328	\$550,000	\$470,000
Spruce Mountain	CO	12/1/04	321	\$2,470,000	\$1,875,000

a few of the year-round activities. While on the property during negotiations, these people were asking us who we were and why we were on their property. Most visitors to the property were unaware that the land was privately owned and were accustomed to using the trails, ski runs, and picnic areas. We conducted meetings with the several homeowners' associations and explained the process of the easement, ownership (and the fact that they had used this land historically in trespass!), and the intent of the State to continue to provide access.

Although the Utah Division of Forestry, Fires, and State Lands had never owned a land parcel, it was now the proud owner of 325 acres of valuable forest land prized by the local community for their recreational enjoyment. It would be of utmost importance to coordinate our expectations, stewardship goals and desires, and trail development with the desires of homeowners' associations and other interested parties.

Because the trails were somewhat hazardous throughout the property, we began by recruiting the Snyderville Basin Trails and Recreation District to assist in trail development. Plans included one circular trail throughout, with designated points of access. The State area forester suggested that we tie our trailhead into his work on hazardous fuel reduction on the site. This work included creating a shaded fuel break and clearing the understory but leaving many small trees and gambel oak. This will create an attractive trailhead that will also serve as a much-needed fuel break.

Money provided through the National Fire Plan has allowed additional hazardous fuel reduction projects. Additionally, State area foresters hosted interagency chainsaw workshops and provided the mulch and small logs from these projects

to the surrounding landowners at no cost. We intend to use some of the larger logs for benches and hill stabilization along the newly developed trails.

Other plans include reclaiming an access road through the property because it is no longer needed for vehicle traffic and invites unauthorized vehicles. Working with Gentry and State area staff, we plan to reclaim the road by planting native grasses and wildflowers. Also, Gentry has agreed to provide equipment to prep the road. We have division funding to place walk-through gating and purchase plant seed and volunteer work crews ready to assist.

Land ownership comes with challenges—one of our surprises was the “cabin” structure just inside the boundary. Locals had hauled windows, a wood-burning stove, and building materials up the mountain and constructed their cabin (our shack). Regardless of the fact it was

on private property, it had been highly used year round. Due to potential fire hazard and unauthorized overnight use, we organized crews and demolished the structure. Helicopter crews donated time and service. They needed refresher training courses for cargo net-haul operations and were able to do this plus haul off heavy debris.

Summit Park has been a learning experience. Our outreach to partners continues and we have established many long-term relationships needed to protect the property. It has provided our division with a demonstration area for various projects. But the ramifications of owning land should be fully understood and anticipated—make sure your agency is ready for the time, cost, and responsibility. Our surrounding landowners provide great vigilance and support, supplemented by ongoing funding and staffing from our agency. We all will be managing this easement in perpetuity.

Total Acres Protected to Date

State	Tracts	Total Acres	Total Cost	FLP Funding
Alabama	1	656	\$666,667	\$500,000
Alaska	1	239	\$241,000	\$174,000
California	5	4,982	\$9,953,000	\$1,495,731
Colorado	2	541	\$3,966,000	\$2,390,000
Connecticut	14	6,789	\$7,723,554	\$4,479,378
Delaware	2	1,356	\$7,830,000	\$3,969,000
Georgia	3	2,896	\$5,798,000	\$4,573,000
Hawaii	2	4,000	\$3,310,000	\$2,745,000
Idaho	2	25,860	\$5,266,576	\$3,954,000
Illinois	6	367	\$1,512,898	\$1,079,174
Indiana	10	3,737	\$4,902,500	\$3,764,300
Maine	17	403,795	\$57,683,205	\$32,763,145
Maryland	7	1,247	\$3,033,000	\$1,358,000
Massachusetts	17	2,999	\$12,268,332	\$5,214,850
Minnesota	17	1,171	\$3,436,800	\$2,179,950
Montana	9	154,579	\$42,191,970	\$20,109,533
New Hampshire	22	200,934	\$31,631,897	\$21,681,072
New Jersey	5	2,597	\$14,003,000	\$2,262,000
New York	6	1,555	\$4,773,400	\$2,403,400
North Carolina	5	4,613	\$13,226,575	\$7,014,060
Puerto Rico	9	1,429	\$1,576,875	\$791,700
Rhode Island	10	1,458	\$3,732,000	\$2,344,000
South Carolina	8	30,683	\$39,225,949	\$23,789,467
Tennessee	6	14,638	\$19,642,000	\$9,932,335
Utah	20	47,967	\$42,102,586	\$14,716,911
Vermont	14	52,044	\$10,128,000	\$6,757,000
Virginia	3	2,743	\$3,929,000	\$2,739,000
Washington	24	15,114	\$51,328,044	\$17,007,429
Wisconsin	13	36,009	\$14,202,790	\$5,731,567
TOTAL	259	1,026,998	\$419,285,618	\$207,900,966

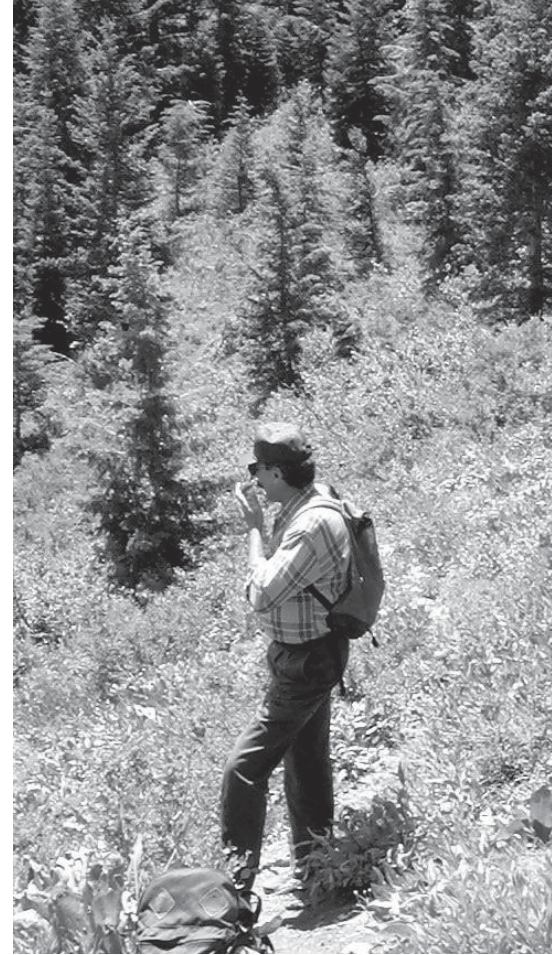
Briefing Congress on the Forest Legacy Program

by Rick Cooksey, National Forest Legacy Program Manager

Congressional Briefings on FLP: What Happens and What Good Do They Do? Twice a year, the Forest Service receives a request to come to Capitol Hill to make a presentation and answer questions about the FLP. Typically, the request is for the agency budget staff, national FLP manager, and others from the State and Private Forestry Deputy Area to appear. These meetings usually occur just before two important events in the development of the annual spending bill—preparation of the House of Representatives and Senate Interior, Related Agency and Environment subcommittees for full committee mark-up and before the Houses of Congress come together in a conference committee to resolve differ-

ences for that fiscal year's appropriations bill. The objectives of the meetings are to learn about program developments, modifications or changes, and proposed projects or changes in projects. These meetings have become regular affairs over the last 4 years.

The outcomes have been a strengthened relationship with the majority and minority staff that work on the FLP for Congress; an opportunity to provide information to support the President's Budget request and its proposed FLP projects; and the chance to build awareness of and support for the cooperative conservation approach of local decisionmaking, State priority-setting, and national accountability that is inherent in the FLP. These opportunities have helped to raise the awareness in Congress of FLP and have increased support for the program as a tool to accomplish the strategic conservation of private working forests.



Unique Approaches to the Forest Legacy Program

As the FLP matures, States are looking for creative approaches to conserve land on a landscape scale, overcoming political and ownership boundaries, and protecting large tracts of land for multiple uses. The following are three examples of projects that are taking new approaches with Forest Legacy funding.

A great example of successfully working across State lines to protect a landscape with high ecological and recreational value is the Tennessee Walls of Jericho and Alabama Cumberland Mountains Projects. The area known as the southern Cumberlands of Tennessee and Alabama (which contains the Walls of Jericho at its center) is recognized by The Nature Conservancy as one of six national hotspots for biodiversity. The Forest Legacy tracts are connected through Tennessee Valley Authority

forest lands, navigable waterways, and the Tennessee River corridor to five federally and State-owned Wildlife Management Areas, totaling in excess of 50,000 acres in Alabama and another 20,000 acres of conservation land in Tennessee.

Perdido River in Alabama is another example of a comprehensive interstate approach to the conservation and management of a unique area—a coastal ecosystem in this case. This project complements the pending acquisition of a 7,400-acre conservation easement on the Florida side of the river by the Florida Forever land acquisition program, as well as 2,386 acres recently purchased by the Florida Chapter of The Nature Conservancy. Securing these tracts supports regional conservation efforts to protect the water quality, biodiversity, various forest types crucial to neotropical migratory songbirds, and the historical/cultural resources of Coastal Lowlands.

The Quabbin to Cardigan region encompasses over 300,000 square miles in the Monadnock Highlands of western New Hampshire and central Massachusetts. The Quabbin to Cardigan Conservation Collaborative is a partnership of 23 public agencies and nonprofits from both States working on a landscape-scale conservation effort. In New Hampshire, four projects totaling 12,160 acres have received Forest Legacy funding.

In Massachusetts, a project composed of 2,100 acres owned by 20 landowners has been proposed. The project will result in the completion of a 9-mile corridor totaling 80,000 conserved acres.

Other Forest Legacy projects explore unique ways of doing business as well. These projects all offer ideas for how Forest Legacy can diversify its methods and continue to successfully promote large-scale land conservation in many different situations.

AON Amendments: Hawaii Responding to Changing Demands

By Sheri Mann, Hawaii Cooperative Resource Forest Manager

For a decade, the State of Hawaii has participated in the FLP. Forest Legacy Areas (FLA) in the original Assessment of Need (AON) approved in 1994 were located on Hawai'i (the Big Island) on the leeward side in the Kona area. FLAs are the areas determined by the State to be the most critical forests, those under threat of conversion and eligible for Forest Legacy funding. The State has completed two acquisitions and has another currently in process. Since then the State has received a significant number of requests from landowners outside of this area, and there have been many changes to the environment, as well as social, political, and policy changes. For these reasons the State Department of Land and Natural Resources and the Hawaii Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee determined, after a review of the AON, to amend and update their plan to address these changes.

The central purposes of amending the AON were to articulate changes in eligibility criteria used to identify FLAs in Hawai'i and utilize recent geographical information system technology to better map these areas. The State also wanted to demonstrate its commitment to restoring and conserving land, as well as to the FLP, by choosing the State Grant Option. Under this option, most Forest Legacy acquisitions are transacted by the State with title vested in the State or a unit of State or local government. The State Department of Land and Natural Resources has placed the AON on a Web site at <http://www.state.hi.us/dlnr/dofaw/Legacy/> and held public meetings about the amended program. The State received approval of its amended AON on February 11, 2005. The State of Hawaii is very excited about using the amended/expanded FLP and what this will mean for forest conservation and restoration in Hawaii's future.

The State of Washington has also recently updated its AON, and Tennessee and North Carolina are in the process of updating their AONs.

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For more information about the Forest Legacy Program, visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/coop/programs/loa/flp.shtml>.

Secretary of Agriculture – Mike Johanns
Chief of the Forest Service – Dale N. Bosworth
Director of Cooperative Forestry – Larry Payne

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